2016 Census of Canada

Population and Dwelling Release

First 2016 Census Release

Alberta leads the provinces in population growth

The first release of the 2016 Census focuses on population and dwelling counts across the country. Over the course of the year, Statistics Canada will release the full suite of census data, the most in-depth and comprehensive information source about Canadians.

On census day (May 10, 2016), Alberta's population count was 4,067,175. This represents an increase of 421,918 new residents, or 11.6%, from the 2011 Census count (Table 1), more than double the national average (5.0%). This was the province's highest population growth rate over the past six censuses and the fourth consecutive census that Alberta had the highest population growth among the provinces. Alberta's share of the national population increased from 10.9% in 2011 to 11.6% in 2016.

Census Divisions (CDs)

Fastest growth in the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor

While population grew across most of the province, there was variation at the regional level. Map 1 shows population change by region over the period of 2011 to 2016. The Calgary-Edmonton corridor, a geographic area which includes CDs 6, 8 and 11, saw the highest growth rates of all the CDs. The fastest growing census division in Alberta was CD 6, which includes Calgary and surrounding municipalities, posting a population increase of 14.3%, followed by CD 11 (Edmonton, 13.5%) and CD 8 (Red Deer, 10.6%). Combined, the corridor added 370,843 residents to its population over the five years, representing a growth rate of 13.7%. These are the most densely populated CDs in the province, with 75.6% of Albertans living in this region in 2016, up slightly from 74.2% in 2011.

Table 1: Census Population Counts and Growth Rates for Canada and the Provinces

Province	2016	2011	% Growth
NL	519,716	514,536	1.0%
PE	142,907	140,204	1.9%
NS	923,598	921,727	0.2%
NB	747,101	751,171	-0.5%
QC	8,164,361	7,903,001	3.3%
ON	13,448,494	12,851,821	4.6%
MB	1,278,365	1,208,268	5.8%
SK	1,098,352	1,033,381	6.3%
AB	4,067,175	3,645,257	11.6%
BC	4,648,055	4,400,057	5.6%
Canada	35,151,728	33,476,688	5.0%

Notes: Excludes data for one or more incompletely enumerated Indian Reserves or Settlements

CD 16, which includes the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo[1], saw its population growth slow in this census period to 9.6% compared to 27.2% in 2006-2011. Many other regions have experienced more muted growth in this period. Certain areas, such as CD 18 (Grande Cache), CD 9 (Rocky Mountain House) and CD 4 (Hanna) all experienced a decline in population.

Large and Mid-sized Urban Centres[2]

Alberta's census metropolitan areas are among the fastest growing in Canada

Alberta has three large urban areas designated as census metropolitan areas (CMA): Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge. The CMA of Lethbridge is the province's newest metropolitan area, and was a notable change in

Who is counted in the Census?

- All Canadian citizens and landed immigrants with a usual place of residence in Canada;
- Canadian citizens and landed immigrants who are abroad and are attached to a military base or diplomatic mission, or who are at sea or in port on a vessel under Canadian registry;
- Non-permanent residents (e.g., refugee claimants, those with study or work permits) who have a usual place of residence in Canada, along with any family residing with them.

For a complete definition of 'usual place of residence', follow this link:

http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop126-eng.cfm

the 2016 Census. These three metro areas are home to 69.6% of Alberta's residents, up slightly from 68.1% in 2011, and accounted for over four-fifths (83.1%) of Alberta's total population growth between 2011 and 2016.

Compared with the growth of other CMAs in Canada, Calgary and Edmonton ranked first and second, respectively (Table 3), for the second consecutive census. In its premiere showing, Lethbridge ranked in fifth place nationally. While the Lethbridge CMA added 11,395 residents (10.8%) between 2011 and 2016, the Edmonton CMA added 161,557 residents (13.9%); meanwhile the Calgary CMA grew by 14.6%, an increase of 177,770 people. With its strong population growth, Calgary is now the fourth-largest CMA in the country, surpassing Ottawa-Gatineau. Edmonton remains the sixth-largest, while Lethbridge is the second-smallest.

High growth in communities surrounding the CMA urban cores

All municipalities located within CMAs in Alberta saw their populations grow between 2011 and 2016. Growth in the City of Calgary (13.0%) itself accounted for 80.1% of the increase in the Calgary CMA; however, some other municipalities in this metropolitan area also experienced particularly high growth. Significant population growth occurred in the three communities of Cochrane (47.1%), Airdrie (42.3%), and Chestermere (34.2%). Both Cochrane and Airdrie posted growth eight times higher than the national average.

Growth in the City of Edmonton (14.8%) accounted for about 74.5% of the metropolitan region's rise in population. Cities adjacent to Edmonton have experienced considerable growth as well, such as Beaumont (31.0%), Spruce Grove (30.2%), Fort Saskatchewan (26.8%) and Leduc (23.4%).

Among municipalities with a population of 5,000 or more (Figure 1), the town of Blackfalds, located near Red Deer, posted the highest growth among the municipalities in the province (48.1%). Sylvan Lake, which is also located close to Red Deer, showed strong growth at 19.9%. In contrast, Bonnyville had the lowest growth, shrinking by 12.9%, or 799 people, between the two censuses. The Municipal District of Westlock shrunk by 5.5%, while Rocky Mountain House shrunk by 4.3%.

Five of the top ten fastest growing mid-sized urban centres were in Alberta

Alberta's high growth can also be traced to changes in its mid-sized urban centers, also referred to as census agglomerations (CA). Among the ten fastest growing CAs in Canada, five were located in Alberta. All 15 of Alberta's CAs saw a population increase. Sylvan Lake (19.6%) was the fastest growing CA in both the province and the country this census (Table 3). Okotoks had the third-fastest growth nationally (17.8%), while Canmore was fifth (13.9%). Grande Prairie (13.5%) and Lloydminister (split by Alberta and Saskatchewan) (12.3%) also made the top ten. Of these CAs, only Canmore was new to the top ten.

Urban/Rural Population Distribution

About five out of six Albertans lived in population centres[4] in 2016

In the 2011 Census, the term 'urban area' was replaced with the term 'population centres'. A population

Figure 1: Municipalities with a population of 5000 or more

Top/Bottom ten growth rates

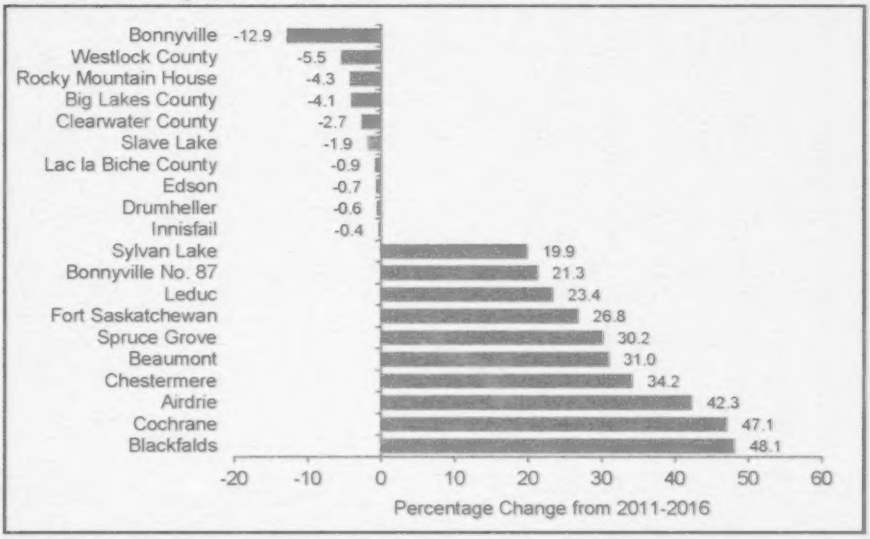

Table 2: Proportion (%) of Urban Population by Province[3]

	1961	2016	% Growth
NL	50.7	58.1	7.4
PE	32.4	45.1	12.7
NS	54.3	57.4	3.1
NB	46.5	49.0	2.5
QB	74.3	80.5	6.2
ON	77.4	86.2	8.8
MN	63.9	73.2	9.3
SK	43.0	66.8	23.8
AB	63.3	83.6	20.3
BC	72.6	86.4	13.8
Canada	69.6	81.3	11.7

Notes: Excludes data for one or more incompletely enumerated Indian Reserves or Settlements

centre is defined as an area with a population of at least 1,000 and has a density of at least 400 people per square kilometer. All areas outside population centres will continue to be referred to as 'rural'.

In 2016, Alberta had 112 small population centres (1,000 to 29,999 residents), which comprised 14.8% of Albertans. The province's seven medium population centres (30,000 to 99,999 population) were home to 12.2% of its residents, and a further 56.6% of Alberta's population resided in the two large population centres (100,000 population and above) of Calgary and Edmonton. Overall, the proportion of Albertans living in population centres was 83.9%, which is up slightly from 2011 (83.1%). The remainder of the provincial population (656,048 people, 16.1%) lived in areas that would be classified as rural using the stated definition.

Alberta is one of Canada's most urban provinces

Alberta continues to urbanize, with 83.6% of its population living in urban settings in 2016, up slightly from 83.1% in 2011. Compared with the other provinces (Table 2), Alberta has the third-highest proportion of urban population, behind only British Columbia (86.4%) and Ontario (86.2%). Over the past half-century, Alberta has experienced one of the fastest urbanization shifts in the country, as the proportion of its urban population grew by 20.3 percentage points since 1961. Only Saskatchewan experienced a larger shift, as the proportion of its population living in urban areas increased by 23.8 percentage points from 1961 to 2016.

1 Due to the wildfire in Fort McMurray, the Census captured the population in that region as of May 1st, before the fire forced the evacuation of that area. Therefore this number does not reflect those who may have moved as a result of the fire.

2 For a detailed definition of census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, follow this link: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo009-eng.cfm

3 Rural population for 1981 to 2006 refers to persons living outside centres with a population of 1,000 AND outside areas with 400 persons per square kilometre. Previous to 1981, the definitions differed slightly but consistently referred to populations outside centres of 1,000 population.

4 For a detailed description of population centres, follow this link: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/geo049a-eng.cfm

The 2016 Census of Population, Canada's largest and most comprehensive survey, is meant to capture the entire population of Canadian residents. However, sometimes persons and dwellings are missed or double-counted, or mistakenly enumerated (i.e., visitors). In the previous census of 2011, approximately 128,600 people were added to Alberta's total population due to census net undercoverage. Net undercoverage estimates will be released in September 2018.

Upcoming 2016 Census of Population Releases

May 3, 2017
Age and Sex; Type of Dwelling

August 2, 2017
Families, Households and Marital Status; Language

September 13, 2017
Income

Contact

Lisa Zaporzan 780.427.8891

Map 1: Population Growth, 2011-2016

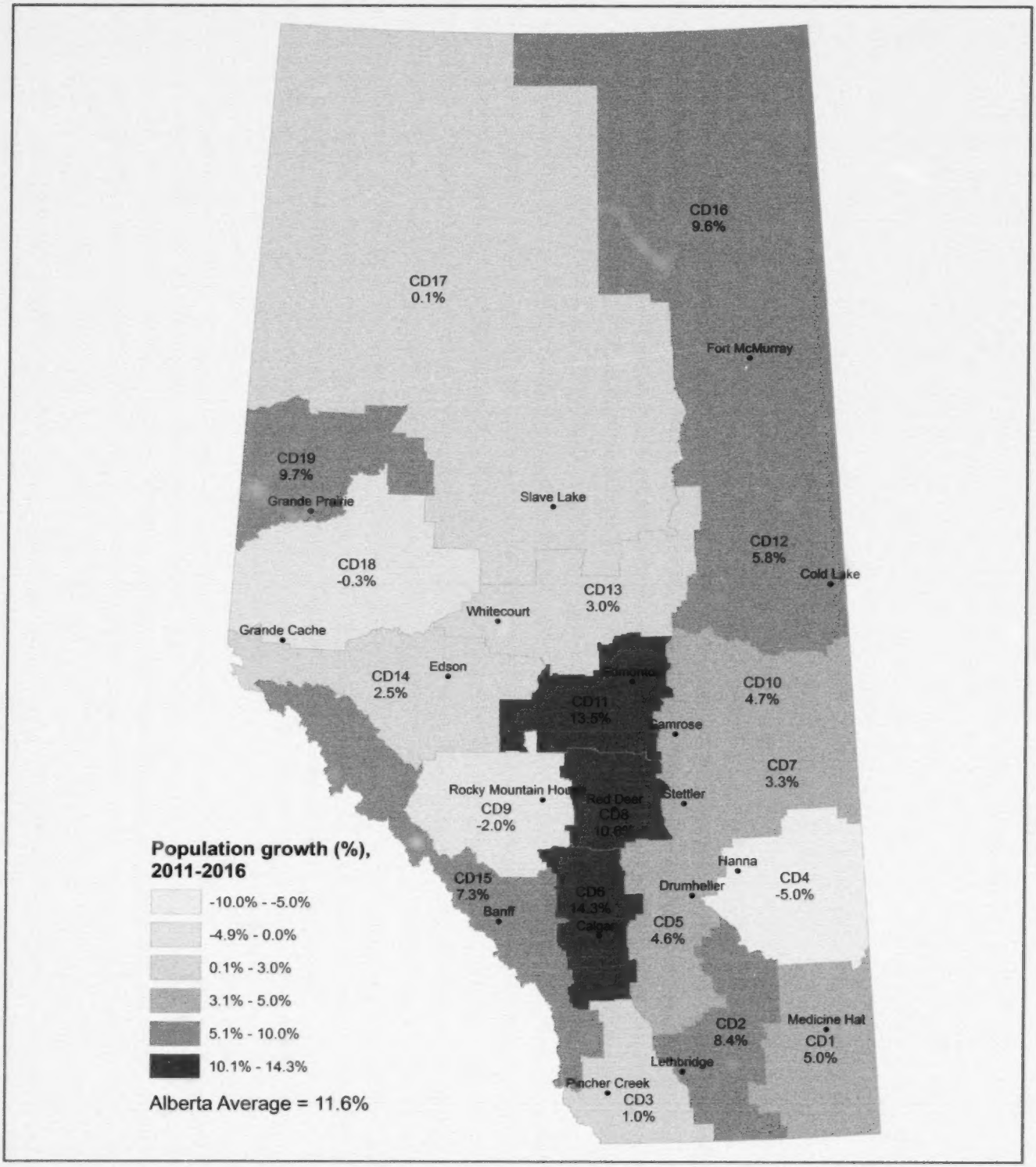

Table 3: Census Population Counts and Per Cent Growth by CMA and the 33 CAs with the Fastest Growth

Census Metropolitan Area	2016	2011	% Change	Census Agglomeration	2016	2011	% Change
Calgary (AB)	1392609	1214839	14.6	Sylvan Lake (AB)	15302	12797	19.6
Edmonton (AB)	1321426	1159869	13.9	Wasaga Beach (ON)	20675	17537	17.9
Saskatoon (SK)	295095	262215	12.5	Okotoks (AB)	28881	24511	17.8
Regina (SK)	236481	211519	11.8	Steinbach (MN)	15829	13524	17.0
Lethbridge (AB)	117394	105999	10.8	Canmore (AB)	13992	12288	13.9
Kelowna (BC)	194882	179839	8.4	Squamish (BC)	19893	17479	13.8
Guelph (ON)	151984	141097	7.7	Grande Prairie (AB)	63166	55655	13.5
Victoria (BC)*	367770	344580	6.7	Collingwood (ON)	21793	19241	13.3
Oshawa (ON)	379848	356177	6.6	Winkler (MN)	30297	26838	12.9
Winnipeg (MN)	778489	730018	6.6	Lloydminster (AB/SK)	34583	30798	12.3
Vancouver (BC)	2463431	2313328	6.5	Strathmore (AB)	13756	12305	11.8
Toronto (ON)	5928040	5583064	6.2	Lacombe (AB)	13057	11707	11.5
Abbotsford - Mission (BC)	180518	170191	6.1	Red Deer (AB)	100418	90564	10.9
Ottawa - Gatineau (ON)	1323783	1254919	5.5	Wood Buffalo (AB)	73320	66896	9.6
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo (ON)	523894	496383	5.5	Cowansville (QB)	13656	12489	9.3
Barrie (ON)	197059	187013	5.4	Whitehorse (YK)	28225	26028	8.4
Sherbrooke (QB)	212105	202261	4.9	Camrose (AB)	18742	17286	8.4
St. John's (NL)	205955	196954	4.6	Woodstock (ON)	40902	37754	8.3
Québec (QB)	800296	767310	4.3	Chilliwack (BC)	101512	93882	8.1
Montréal (QB)*	4098927	3934078	4.2	Cold Lake (AB)	14961	13839	8.1
London (ON)	494069	474786	4.1	Carleton Place (ON)	31451	29180	7.8
Moncton (NB)	144810	139287	4.0	Fort St. John (BC)	28396	26380	7.6
Hamilton (ON)	747545	721053	3.7	Petawawa (ON)	17187	15988	7.5
St. Catharines - Niagara (ON)	406074	392184	3.5	Nanaimo (BC)	104936	98021	7.1
Halifax (NS)	403390	390328	3.3	Thompson (MN)	13678	12829	6.6
Windsor (ON)	329144	319246	3.1	Victoriaville (QB)	49151	46354	6.0
Trois-Rivières (QB)	156042	151773	2.8	Charlottetown (PEI)	69325	65523	5.8
Peterborough (ON)	121721	118975	2.3	Brandon (MN)	58003	54847	5.8
Belleville (ON)	103472	101668	1.8	Swift Current (SK)	18536	17535	5.7
Saguenay (QB)	160980	158658	1.5	Centre Wellington (ON)	28191	26693	5.6
Kingston (ON)	161175	159561	1.0	Drummondville (QB)	96118	91222	5.4
Greater Sudbury (ON)	164689	163067	1.0	Joliette (QB)	49439	46932	5.3
Thunder Bay (ON)	121621	121596	0.0	Brooks (AB)	24662	23430	5.3

* Excludes data for one or more incompletely enumerated Indian Reserves or Settlements